

**CITIZEN ON ASSIGNMENT**

# Retiring letter carrier makes final delivery

BY ANDY SHAW  
CITIZEN ON ASSIGNMENT

John Leach's last day on the job was one of his lightest. The 63-year-old Markham letter carrier retired on his birthday Oct. 30, delivering his last bag of mail along his Raymerville Drive route on a brilliant fall day.

It was much the same weather 24 years ago when he hoisted his first bag of mail for Canada Post. But his co-workers, and possibly the Gods, conspired to lighten the affable mail carrier's last load.

"My supervisor did my afternoon route as a little going away gift, and even on my morning route, I don't think I've ever had so little mail," Leach said.

So Leach sped through the morning portion of his 521 "calls" to apartments, houses and strip-mall businesses in near record time of just over two hours. "When I was younger, I could do that even on a heavy mail day."

Leach's still quick step is a legacy of 12 years of military training in the British Royal Navy. Born in London, England, Leach and his wife Barbara (now a Markham Transit employee) later emigrated to Canada.

After a year in the sheet-metal business working for his brother, Leach joined Canada Post in Markham, initially as a mail truck driver. "Coming here was the best decision I ever made," Leach said. "And working for Canada Post is the best job I could have had. Once you've sorted the mail in the morning, you're your own boss for the rest of the day. And, in

effect, Canada Post is paying you to stay fit."

For about 21 years, Leach has been walking 10 miles (16 kilometres) a day, delivering mail five days a week and wearing out about four pairs of footwear a year. He estimates he's walked about twice around the earth.

The regular 6:30 a.m. to mid-afternoon hours at Canada Post also left Leach and his wife time to pursue other inter-

ests. Both are members of the Markham District Veterans Association, and John served five years as the MDVA president. Now they will have more time to spend with three adult sons and three grandchildren.

In retirement, Leach plans to walk his dog for fitness, travel to England to visit relatives, as well as do some house painting and fix-up work as a sideline.



PHOTO/ANDY SHAW

John Leach takes a final walk along his Raymerville Drive route on his last day on the job.

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45	\$200	\$375	\$725	45	\$200	\$310	\$595
50	\$303	\$580	\$1135	50	\$200	\$375	\$725
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